

22S32 James 4:11-17 (Part 9) Do Not

Hello everyone. Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. I hope everyone is doing well. Today we are beginning our study of James with James 4:11-174 (Part 9) Do Not

Before we start, we need to understand a little about this amazing short letter from James. Who was James? Historians are not sure. Many believe this is James the half-brother of Jesus or even another early Church leader. Most believe this is the same James that appears in the book of Acts and was the leader of the Jerusalem Council in Acts Chapter 15. We don't know the exact date it was written but there are indications that this was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD, but we really don't know. The best guess is 50-60AD. Which would make this one of the earliest New Testament letters. James was writing to Hebrew believers scattered among the nations who are facing many trials and persecution. The main theme in this letter is patient perseverance in the midst of the trouble of life. James is encouraging his readers to actively live what they have learned in Christ. He has strong messages about various sins but includes pride, hypocrisy, favoritism, and slander.

I'm reading from the New American Standard version (NAS) today. But of course, you can use whatever translation you choose.

Let's read James 4:11-17 (NAS) ¹¹ *Do not speak against one another, brothers and sisters. The one who speaks against a brother or sister, or judges his brother or sister, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it.* ¹² *There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you, judging your neighbor?* ¹³ *Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit."* ¹⁴ *Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. For you are just a vapor that appears for a little while, and then vanishes away.* ¹⁵ *Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that."* ¹⁶ *But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.* ¹⁷ *So for one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, for him it is sin.*

Let's pray. Dear heavenly father, guide our discussion today such that your message is clear to each of us. As we read your word from James, help us see what James wants his readers to understand and why. I pray that you help me stay out of the way so your hope and peace can be shared with us. I pray this in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.

Now, let's take a closer look at these verses, James 4:11 (NAS) ¹¹ *Do not speak against one another, brothers and sisters. The one who speaks against a brother or sister, or judges his brother or sister, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it.* These verses can be a little confusing. We need to be careful when we speak against someone else. This means

gossiping behind someone's back. This could mean accusing someone of something without all the facts.

Let's read on, James 4:12 (NAS). *¹²There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you, judging your neighbor?* But who do we think we are. Only God can decide what is right and wrong. And only God can judge whether people have done good or bad. Not us. Now, pointing out problems or bad behavior is not judging someone. Let me be clear, judging is when we condemn people for their actions. That is not our job. That's God's. But we still must help our fellow brothers and sisters. To not point out a problem, is hateful. You could be condemning them to eternity without God, so words of correction are not judging.

Then James says in James 4:13-14 (NAS), *¹³Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." ¹⁴Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. For you are just a vapor that appears for a little while, and then vanishes away.* Okay, God is NOT telling we should not plan ahead. James is addressing the arrogance of these statements, not the planning would be foolish. Arrogance and pride are bad. We don't know what tomorrow will bring. Our lives are like a vapor or mist or steam off a pot, it appears for only a little while then it's gone. We need to remember our lives here on earth are short, but everlasting life is forever. What we do in this short time here has lasting impact.

Then James says in James 4:15-17 (NAS). *¹⁵Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that." ¹⁶But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. ¹⁷So for one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, for him it is sin.* James is so right here. Our lives belong to God. God has the power to do whatever He chooses. If the Lord wills it, then. Humble toward God. Arrogance is evil. We are followers of Christ; we should know better. As people who know better, such arrogance is a sin.

Let's review.

- 1) Judging? Why, don't Judge? Well that is not what the scripture says, that is not what this scripture says. What James means is we should not condemn people; we are all sinners. We all make mistakes. We need to help one another. When we see something that is wrong, we must tell other brothers and sisters. It is actually hateful not to correct someone, you might be condemning them to eternal life without God. So, this is very important.
- 2) Law Giver? I think we miss this in our modern world too much. God is the one and only source of truth and justice. God is the source of the "Law", this is not the law of Moses or our laws in our country. God is the source of the "LAW". God defines good and bad, not us. He is the law giver, and as such God is the only one who can judge us or condemn us for failing to follow the law. Good thing Jesus died for us and made a way for us because our selfishness and arrogance always results in us breaking God's law. Or another way to say this is we do the wrong things when we should do what God wants us to do.

- 3) Arrogance? Arrogance is evil. James was not saying we can't plan ahead. James was making a statement about our arrogance. We boast when we should say if God's allows me to do, whatever, then I'll do it. This is really about being totally surrendered to God. Let Jesus led. Let Jesus be in control of our lives, He is already in control, we just need to stop. We need to listen to the Lord and follow. If God allows me, I'll share another lesson in James next week.

Let's Pray. Heavenly Father thank you for this letter from James. Help us to read and meditate on this letter so we can hear the message you have for us. Help us to remember who you are Lord. You are our king, king of kings. You are our Lord, Lord over everyone. We can trust you, Lord. Help us to ask you for wisdom when we don't understand. I pray this in your Name Lord Jesus. Amen

Let me leave you with this, arrogance is evil. Our selfishness, boasting and arrogance always gets us into trouble. We should always be mindful of what God wants from us and for us to do. Last time we talked about bitterness and envy and jealousy, this time arrogance. Do you see the pattern. Do you see your pattern of behavior in these words. Well I sure do. I know I need to continually focus on God and what He wants, or these behaviors will take control of my life. I hurt others with my words and actions and I hurt myself with my words and actions. God really knows best, even if it is against what we want at the moment. God knows best. He's God, of course He knows what is best for me and you and everyone around us. Choose Jesus, Trust Jesus, and live an abundantly better life of peace, hope, joy and hope.

Thank you for joining me for our study of James. Please email me comments or feedback. And if you liked the message, please share the link with your friends. Until next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.